Indian Nationals Languishing in Foreign Jails

*216. SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE:
SHRI KAILASH PATI MISHRA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of Indian nationals who are at present languishing in the jails in different countries and since when, country-wise;

(b) what is the number of cases that have been taken up by Government with the irrespective countries, country-wise, for their release; and

(c) what is the number of Indian nationals released by each country during each of the last three years and so far during the current year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House as early as possible.

Inner-Line permit for North-Eastern States

*217. SHRI CHITTA BASU: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether at a Conference of major regional parties of the North East, there was a demand that inner-line permit, now in force in Nagaland, Arunacha Pradesh and Mizoram, be introduced in all the States in the region; and

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI BUTA SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Government is keen that the interests of the tribals in the North East should be safeguarded but any restriction on movement of Indian Citizens has to be viewed in the context of national integration alongwith the interests of the general public or of Scheduled Tribes.

Indo-US Relations

*218. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indo-US relations have been getting strained for the past few years;

(b) if so, what are the major areas of policy discord resulting in strained relations between the two countries;

(c) what are the major projects which have been stalled because of the growing strained relations between the two countries; and

(d) whether any talks were held between the two Governments to resolve the issues involved for better understanding and cooperation and if so, what results have been achieved so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH): (a) There has been an improvement in Indo-US relations in recent years notwithstanding differences between the two countries on some regional and international issues.

(b) The continuous supply of sophisticated arms to Pakistan Beyond its defence requirements and the tolerance of Pakistan's obvious attempts to acquire a nuclear weapons capability despite the flouting of American laws that this has meant.

(c) None, Sir.

(d) There is a continuous dialogue between the two countries at all levels on bilateral, regional and